

From: [Miller, Garyg](#)
To: [Durant, Jennah](#)
Subject: FW: Furr High School Student Letters
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 2:11:00 PM

Here it is!

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From: Miller, Garyg
Sent: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:46 AM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Subject: Furr High School Student Letters

Jennah – here it is. I'll also sent you the students' letters.

Thanks

Thank you for your letter regarding the San Jacinto Waste Pits Superfund Site. We share your concerns about the contaminants in the San Jacinto River and in the fish. Although there has not been a decision yet on the final cleanup technology to be used at the site, there has been progress. For example, construction of the temporary armor cap over the pits in 2011 is preventing the paper mill dioxin wastes from washing into the river and isolated the pits from people who were fishing there. Concentrations of dioxins in the fish near the site should start to decrease with the temporary cap in place and with implementation of the final permanent remedy decision. Unfortunately, fish advisories throughout the San Jacinto River will likely remain in place due to contamination from dioxins and PCBs from other sources.

Finding out where the contamination is and how it may have moved has taken up much of the time. The next step is developing a good cleanup plan for all of the site. Currently, the EPA is working with the U.S. Corps of Engineers to perform an independent review of the site, river conditions, and cleanup alternatives. The Corps of Engineers will also complete an investigation of the recently discovered and repaired damaged area of the cap. Once these are completed, the EPA will announce a proposed alternative that will be available for public comment and will also host a public meeting during the comment period to allow public participation in the remedy selection process. The announcement of the proposed plan is scheduled for the end of this year. The Potentially Responsible Parties who produced the paper mill waste and who transported it to the site are paying for and performing the investigation and cleanup under EPA direction and oversight.

We have heard from residents who believe their health problems are a direct result of the dioxin



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waste that has been identified in the pits. We understand that people are concerned about this issue and have a lot of questions. Several agencies, both state and federal, have been looking into the potential risk of exposure from the site.

It's important to remember that even though someone is exposed to dioxin, this does not mean that they will experience health problems. The amount of exposure, the length of the exposure, and the route of exposure all have to be considered when determining if a person may or may not have the potential for developing health problems.

All people in the United States are believed to have some level of dioxins in their body fat and blood. Dioxins are found throughout the environment and most people are exposed to low levels in the air, soil, or food. People that eat fish, meat, or dairy products that contain higher levels of dioxins may have a higher level of dioxin in their body. Typically health effects related to environmental exposures take many years to develop.

Short term exposures to high levels of dioxin may result in skin lesions, such as chloracne and patchy darkening of the skin, and altered liver function.

Long-term or chronic exposure has been linked to changes in the immune system or the body's ability to fight disease, reproductive and developmental defects in children whose mothers are exposed during pregnancy, an increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes, and an increased risk of developing cancer.

However, these health problems can also be caused by many factors. For instance, cancer is not a single disease, meaning that everyone's cancer is the same. It is really many different types of diseases that vary in the causes or origins. Cancers are most likely caused by a combination of many genetic, lifestyle, environmental, and other risk factors.

Because cancer is so common, cases might appear to occur with alarming rates even when the number of cases is within the number we would expect to see in a given population.

We recommend that you speak to your personal physician if you have health concerns. If you would like additional information, you may contact the Texas Department of State Health Services at 512-776-2932.

Sincerely,

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